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Trust in and by the public sector

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Introduction: A trust gap between citizens and the public sector?

Declining trust between citizens and the public sector has been high on the public agenda for quite a while now. Such declining trust and sometimes even increasing distrust has been related to issues such as the emergence of new political parties running on an anti-government sentiment, aggression of citizens towards civil servants, a low attractiveness of public employment, public organisations' desire to demand ever more proof from citizens when taking decisions, or increased government surveillance. Such evidence of declining trust can be complemented by an almost equally substantial body of evidence of stable or increasing levels of trust. Examples are a desire to involve citizens in public decision-making, an absence of large-scale visible challenging of government decisions, and a move towards less coercive and more collaborative relations between the public sector and citizens.

We take Möllering's (2006: 111) definition of trust as starting point: 'trust is an ongoing process of building on reason, routine and reflexivity, suspending irreducible social vulnerability and uncertainty *as if* they were favourably resolved, and maintaining thereby a state of favourable expectation toward the actions and intentions of more or less specific others'. We thus assume that knowledge about specific others alone does not warrant trust; it also involves some sort of faith that is not explained by knowledge. Distrust also reduces uncertainty, but in a different way: it does not involve a leap of faith, since it involves negative expectations toward people's intentions and intentions (Van de Walle & Six, 2014).

In this chapter, we distinguish between two trust relationships. One is that of citizens in the public sector. The other is that of the public sector in citizens. The focus will thus be on relationships between citizens and the public sector. Trust relationships between public organisations themselves will not be discussed in this chapter. We will first look at signals and evidence that trust is changing –

both in the direction of more trust, and in the direction of less trust and more distrust. Then, we discuss initiatives aimed at increasing trust and reducing distrust between citizens and the public sector, both at the institutional level, and at the level of specific encounters between citizens and public services or public servants. We end by formulating a research agenda to study trust and distrust in and by the public sector, to counter the current scarcity of empirical literature on trust in and by the public sector.

Citizen trust in the public sector- signals and evidence

Public sector reforms have often been motivated by a presumed lack of public trust in public services (Bok, 2001; Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2007). Public services are said to be either inefficient, wasteful and ineffective, or power-hungry with little eye for citizens' needs and desires. Political rhetoric in itself is however insufficient to get a coherent picture of the extent to which citizens actually trust the public sector, public services, and individual public servants. To construct such a picture, one needs to look at various pieces of evidence. In this section we look at several pieces of evidence. First, we discuss attitudes as measured in polls. Then we look at citizen voice, or the ways in which citizens express their discontent. This can range from mere complaining, to going to court, or to becoming outright aggressive during interaction with the public sector. Finally, one can look at exit behaviours, whereby citizens decide to end their relation with the public sector. While trust in the public sector has been at the core of reform debates, the academic literature on trust in the public sector is remarkably scarce.

Attitudes

Citizen trust in the public sector is traditionally measured through opinion surveys that contain a number of items on the public sector. Changes in political trust have been well documented, yet for trust in public administration, far fewer indicators are available. Established surveys such as the World Values surveys, the American National Election Studies, the European Social Survey, or various Barometers (Eurobarometer, Latinobarómetro, Asia and Asian Barometer) have collected information about attitudes towards a number of specific public services, as well as more general

attitudes toward the public sector, bureaucracy, or government. Many of these measurements are fairly recent. Where such data is available, there is no apparent trend of decreasing trust in the public sector (Van de Walle, 2008), although there is wide variation across institutions and countries. More specific evidence regarding citizens' attitudes to public services can be found in the literature on satisfaction with services, but this material tends not to use the concept 'trust'. Seminal works in this respect have been written by Goodsell (1983, 'the case for bureaucracy') or Katz et al. (1977).

Many public services are among the most trusted institutions. Examples are schools, the health system, or the fire services. Individuals within these services enjoy even more trust, especially when it concerns teachers, doctors or firefighters. Opinions on the army and defence personnel are more mixed – very positive in some countries, but negative in others. At the same time, citizens tend to have low trust in more abstract institutions of functions, such as public administration, civil servants, or bureaucrats (Van de Walle & Van Ryzin, 2011). They also tend to place high trust in their own local school, hospital and so on, yet tend to be more critical about the school system of health system as a whole (Cowell et al., 2012). Trust in public services also to a large extent depends on the process through which services are delivered, and not just on the actual outcomes of interactions with the public sector (Van Ryzin, 2011). Finally, trust can be based on actual experiences and interactions, but also on generalised attitudes towards others and towards government (Houston & Howard Harding, 2013; Marlowe, 2004).

While information on attitudes is fairly easy to collect, and measurement practice is improving (see e.g. Grimmelikhuijsen & Knies, 2015), attitudes do not tell us all there is to know about trust in the public sector. For governments themselves, attitudes become important when they are associated with behaviours. Researchers have also started paying closer attention to behaviours rather than to attitudes.

Voice

A first type of behaviour to look at when assessing whether citizens trust the public sector, is by looking at what Hirschman (1970) has called 'voice'. Voice is a response to a perceived decline in a (public) organisation. When citizens use voice, they signal a problem in the organisation, a signal that

can then be used by the organisation to repair. Such voice can consist of formal and informal complaints or of complaints through ombudsmen, or it can become more public and political when citizens take their compliant to social media or to a political forum. Voting for an anti-system party or a party that promises to do away with wasteful government is another example. Voice can also be organized collectively, and then becomes visible in organised interest groups, consumer committees, or more ad-hoc protests against public sector organisations. Examples include for instance protests against discriminatory police practices, the planned implantation of an asylum seekers centre etc. Voice can be a powerful signal and often confrontational, and is especially important to monitor in a public sector context where citizen do not always have the option to stop interacting with a public service (Dowding & John, 2012).

Aggression against public servants

Another type of behaviour is citizen aggression against public servants. This could be considered an extreme type of voice, or even beyond, and clearly signals discontent or frustration. Aggression towards public servants is receiving increasing attention, both in academia and among policy makers. Such aggression can take a fairly low-key appearance, such as shouting, but could also be more serious, in the form of stalking, stabbing, or even murdering public employees (Tummers, 2016). One such event, the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, in which a US government building was targeted, served as the inspiration for Nye et al.'s 1997 book ' Why People don't Trust Government' (Nye et al., 1997)

Legalization of interactions

A less extreme signal of potentially low levels of citizen trust in the public sector is a legalization of interactions, as is apparent in string rule following and the use of extensive contractual arrangements to regulate interactions. This is a specific expression of a trend towards legalistic organizations (Sitkin & Bies, 1993). Whilst it is true that contract-like arrangements make trust between parties possible, the extensive use of contracts may also mean that that trust was absent in the first place (see, e.g. Klein Woolthuis et al., 2005). Sitkin and Bies suggested such legalization does little to restore trust (Sitkin & Roth, 1993). Such legalization makes delivering public services increasingly expensive with

transaction costs spiralling. Where voice is a first line of defence against public services that do not live up to expectation, citizens going to court is a second. A lack of trust then becomes visible in the number of lawsuits citizens wage against government, or the number of appeals through various appeal boards. Examples can be found throughout the public sectors, ranging from students appealing against their grades, over citizens suing their local government for defective infrastructure, to companies appealing against procurement decisions. It remains unclear though whether such an increase is due to declining trust, or the result of previously silent citizens now knowing what their rights are. The opposite trend also appears to exist, with relations between government and citizens or between government and other public and private actors becoming increasingly based on informal norms and new steering mechanisms not governed by law or contracts, but by long term established relations of trust (see Groeneveld & Van de Walle, 2011 for an overview).

Exit

A final signal one can use to assess the state of citizen trust in the public sector is what Hirschman (1970) called exit, or citizens turning their back to the public sector and moving elsewhere. Exit is a response to failing public service (Dowding & John, 2008). Exit can take many different forms, for instance when parents decide to start home-schooling their children or to set up their own care-initiative for a disabled child (Gofen, 2015), or when communities start using their own dispute settlement mechanism or set up their own security services. It can also mean moving from a public to a private provider in health care or education, or even moving to alternative providers such as homeopaths or natural healers when trust in the public health system is low. Exit can also take the form of total exit, when citizens decide to end their relationship to a public service altogether. Extreme forms of exit are visible in e.g. anti-vaccination movements or communities of off-gridders.

Non-entry is an alternative approach. Non-entry means that citizens do not even make the decision to start using public service (Rokkan, 1974). Other scholars have used the term ‘non-take-up’ of public services referring to citizens who are entitled to use a service but who have decided not to make use of them (Warin, 2008). Distrust is an important explanation for such non-take-up. It occurs especially in relations to welfare services when citizens are for instance distrustful of the motives of a social

service or youth affairs department, when they suspect the education system of brainwashing their children, or when immigrants decide not to register with immigration departments.

Public sector trust in citizens – signals and evidence

When trust in the public sector is discussed or studied, attention mainly goes to citizens' trust in the public sector. The other side of the trust relationship generally receives less attention: the public sector's trust in citizens. The public sector and the people working therein also make decisions about the trustworthiness of citizens when interacting with them. This is important, because making an incorrect judgement may mean that disproportionate burdens are inflicted on citizens to prove their case, or that citizens get away with benefits they are not entitled to. Some citizens are considered trustworthy, and hence not subject to elaborate surveillance or coercion, whereas other citizens are seen as untrustworthy and therefore to be monitored. Meeting with citizens who are untrustworthy is quite common for public servants, and many public organisations exist precisely because of this assumption – think for instance about police forces, tax inspections, or parking wardens. Again, one can look at various signals and evidence to establish whether or not public servants trust the citizens they are supposed to serve, and whether distrust also plays a role in this. These signals are located both at the level of delivery and at the level of policymaking.

Surveillance, monitoring and control

When governments use an elaborate array of monitoring and surveillance tools, this may tell us something about the public sector's trust in citizens. It is not entirely clear though what it tells us (Van de Walle, 2016). Monitoring and surveillance tools have become ever more omnipresent, and the public sector's capacity to control has increased (Power, 1999). The public sector combines datasets and constructs profiles of citizens and citizen groups. One the one hand, one could see the presence of such surveillance as an indication that government and public servants distrust citizens and deploy monitoring tools to punish untrustworthy behaviours. Monitoring tools are then substitutes of trust. On the other hand, having more information about the trustee makes it easier to decide whether or not to extend trust. Monitoring tools are then complements to trust.

The dominant reasoning in the literature however appears to be that the increase in monitoring tools reflects an increasing distrust in citizens. Indeed, a move to new public management–style steering arrangements brought with it a strong rhetoric about citizen empowerment (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992), but did in fact institutionalise a range of distrust-based instruments. (Van de Walle, 2010). More recently, one can also observe a gradual trend towards transferring the burden of proof away from the public sector to the citizen, as was already the case in taxation issues.

Public involvement in decision-making

Whether or not public servants trust citizens can also be deduced form their general willingness to involve citizens in policy making. This is a quite contentious topic, because public servants are often quite reluctant to involve citizens, who are sometime seen as untrustworthy (Yang, 2006). The main reasons for such attitude are perceived lack of ability on the part of citizens to understand complex policy issues, and fear that citizens will mainly try to further their own self-interest rather than the common good (Moyson et al., 2016). The extent to which citizens are involved in actual decision making, within but also beyond legal involvement requirements, gives a good indication of their perceived trustworthiness.

Closing the trust gap

Distrust is an essential building block of the relation between citizens and the public sector. Dysfunctional effects of such distrust, such as the need for documentation, control-mechanisms and high transaction costs are at the core of how governments function, which is seen as way to protect citizens against illegal government actions or too strong concentration of power. Low citizen trust in the public sector can be seen as a healthy attitude leading to proper oversight, and low public sector trust in citizens as a necessity to avoid abuse of public means (see also Möllering, 2006; Hardin, 2002). Still, a desire to build more trust is at the centre of many public sector modernisation initiatives, with an aim to lower transaction costs and to become more effective in service delivery. Such measures to build trust and reduce distrust operate at different levels: the institutional level and

the interpersonal level. A number of measures have received a fair degree of attention in the public administration literature and are discussed below.

At the institutional level we see a strong focus on increasing transparency as a means of increasing trust. We also see a tendency away from command-and-control based ways of working to trust-based working. At the level of the actual encounter between citizens and the public sector we see for example that frontline tax officials have more leeway to look at the specificity of each case, and to reach agreements with taxpayers when the latter have proven to be trustworthy. When we look at social services, we see a trend in which public officials do not take professional responsibility for citizens' situations, but in which professionals stress citizens' own responsibility or in which the latter's wishes are uncritically met (Eikenaar et al., 2015). In these instances, professionals do not adopt the role of 'omniscient expert', but both trust citizens' capacity to indicate what they need, as their intentions as to why they need a service.

Creating trust and reducing distrust - institutional solutions

Transparency

One way of attempting to increase trust between citizens and the public sector consists of improving transparency. Prominent examples are the widespread adoption of freedom of information laws and publicly available indicators and rankings about the performance of public institutions (Van de Walle & Roberts, 2008). But it is not just government that is made more transparent. Government are also obtaining ever more information about citizens, making citizens more transparent. These two types of transparency can be seen as attempts to make knowledge- or information-based trust possible. Despite transparency's prominent place on the agenda of many political movements, the contribution of transparency to trust is not entirely convincing. Making the public sector or citizens transparent may also give rise to more reasons to distrust each other (see e.g. Etzioni, 2010). Good examples are the publication of politicians' and public servants' expense accounts or Wikileaks.

Experimental research by Grimmelikhuijsen (2014) found that the effect of increased transparency of government organisations on citizen trust is limited. Indeed, many decision-making bodies operate behind closed doors, because transparency is expected to decrease the quality of decision-making, or

may undermine institutional trust when it would become visible that public decision-making is not always rational or when it would appear that decisions are not always based on generalizable principles (Chamber, 2004). Examples are decisions of judges, some appeals boards, juries, peace negotiations, recruitment committees, or talks between a monarch and his or her ministers. Full transparency could also undermine the effectiveness of measures, such as when a decision would lead to higher property prices, or when a bank or currency is to be saved.

Trust-based working

Dissatisfaction with the enormous transaction costs as a result of relying on distrust-based mechanisms and extensive control and surveillance mechanisms has stimulated a gradual move towards trust-based working within the public sector. This is visible in a number of areas (see also Groeneveld & Van de Walle, 2011). One example is the area of public and public-private partnerships, where scholars focus on the need for trust between partners to make policy and delivery networks function (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; Huxham and Vangen, 2005). A similar evolution is visible in contracting and commissioning relationships where partners commit to each other for the long term, rather than having a short-term antagonistic relationship governed by extensive contracts and dispute-settlement mechanisms (Greve, 2009). A final example comes from the literature on inspections and regulators where initiatives such as self-regulation or responsive regulation are replacing more punitive regulation styles (see Six, 2013 for an overview).

Creating trust and reducing distrust in bureaucratic encounters

Institutional solutions are emphasized in the public administration literature, giving more room to frontline public officials to involve citizens and establish trust. However, whether and how trust is or is not established in official-citizen interactions is often neglected. While not explicitly addressed, the street-level bureaucracy literature (based on Lipsky, 1980) suggests that trustworthiness judgments are part and parcel of frontline public service work. For social workers, as example, it has always been problematic to determine disability of a citizen, 'because physical and mental incapacity are conditions that can be feigned for secondary gain' (Stone, 1984: 23). Since it is assumed that people have incentives to escape the labor market, 'the concept of disability has always been based on a

perceived need to detect deception' (ibid.: 23). The traditional top-down bureaucracies, then, are based on distrust encounters with citizens.

Nowadays, however, there appears to be the assumption among public administration scholars and policy makers alike, that citizens' trust in government is related to the trust governments have in citizens: 'citizens will not trust public administrators if they know or feel that public officials do not trust them' (Yang, 2005: 273). Hence, the interaction between public officials and citizens has come to the forefront and is increasingly seen as a valuable phenomenon for study in itself (Bartels, 2013). The public encounter, the place where officials and citizens meet, is seen as crucial aspect in fostering trust, commitment and collaboration between public officials and citizens (Bartels, 2013), which in turn could help to democratize and legitimate the state (Peters, 2004). This is not only discernable in social welfare agencies, but also in organizations engaged in the more traditional regulation and law enforcement functions of the government, such as inspection agencies and tax administrations (e.g. Burgemeestre et al., 2010; Leviner, 2009; Mascini & Van Wijk, 2009; Sakurai, 2002). This trend in (street-level) bureaucracies towards more horizontal relationships with citizens, then, shifts attention from detecting deception and untrustworthiness to establishing trust relationships.

The street-level bureaucracy literature suggests that officials' trustworthiness judgments are affected by different factors: citizens' characteristics, officials' mind-sets and working routines, and their work context.

Goodwill and competence

Frontline work is essentially about categorizing citizens: who is trustworthy and who isn't, based on both organizational classification systems and rules, as cultural schemes, moral beliefs and stereotypes (Dubois, 2013; Hasenfeld, 2000; Kingfisher, 1998; Lipsky, 1980; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003; Mennerick, 1974; Prottas, 1979). The specific categories a public official looks at depends on the specific policy fields s/he is working in (e.g. disability benefits, work reintegration, horizontal inspection), but also on the type of work s/he is doing (service provision or regulation), and the organizational norms and culture (stringent or more room for discretion). The street-level bureaucracy literature points out that public service workers are generally concerned with distinguishing

the deserving from undeserving citizens (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003). Besides assessing whether there is a 'real need', frontline public officials also look at the moral deservingness of citizens (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003; Møller & Stone, 2013).

Deserving citizens are believed to be benevolent towards the government and individual officials: 'morally worthy citizens do not try to con or scam workers or the system' (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003: 104). It is held that citizens, even with genuine needs, 'who try to manipulate the system for undue advantage are labeled troublemakers' (ibid.: 104). Although these citizens are not withheld the services, workers do not go out of their way to help the manipulative and over-demanding citizens. Such citizens are viewed with suspicion, since they might be driven by other reasons, beyond a 'real disability', to apply for a service. Moreover, worthy clients are considered good investments in the long run: 'if citizens have genuine needs, are of good character, and are motivated to respond to treatment, then they are likely to repay society for street-level workers' investments of time, effort and money' (ibid.: 106). In this sense, they trust those citizens that make workers' investment worth the effort.

The literature on regulatory encounters theorizes about how regulators' enforcement styles influence citizens' compliance with rules and regulation, and about the latter's motivations for complying or not complying (e.g. Ayres & Braithwaite, 1992; Bardach & Kagan, 1982/2002; Mascini & Van Wijk, 2009). Much research has been done on how regulatees can be classified in terms of their compliance. Kagan and Scholz (1984) distinguish three types of regulatees: the amoral calculator who justifies non-compliance by economic opportunity and profit; the political citizen who generally complies with legislation but is prepared to disobey in case of principled disagreement; and the organizational incompetent regulatee whose violations are unintended. This suggests that the category of compliance encompasses two aspects of trustworthiness: a regulatee must be *competent and willing* to abide by the law.

Public officials' mind-sets and working routines

Besides citizen characteristics, also officials' mind-sets and working routines affect whether trust is established and distrust minimalized within the public encounter. Officials who are in public service for over thirty years probably have a different outlook on their work and clientele than their less seasoned colleagues (e.g. Blau, 1960; Engbersen, 2006). In this vein, Blau (1960) talks about the reality shock newcomers experience when they first enter public welfare agencies:

'Finding out that people one has trusted have lied is a threatening experience. It implies that one has been made a fool of and that others are laughing behind his back at his naiveté. To protect his ego against these threats, a case worker is under pressure to change his orientation toward clients. If he anticipates deception by distrusting the statements of recipients, their lies no longer pose a threat to his ego' (p. 349).

Moreover, more tenured and newly hired employees likely differ in their mindsets not only because of years of experience in working with citizens, but also because they are differently trained. Where distrust-based encounters were commonplace in the traditional machine-like bureaucracies, nowadays public organizations also want their employees to be open and trusting toward citizens. New institutional solutions such as trust-based working give more room for interpretation to frontline workers, and mean officials also need to be willing to trust citizens. Moreover, since there is more room for interpretation, there will likely be differences in judgments between frontline officials, leading to different decisions. When trust or distrust serves as an attitude in itself, positive or negative expectations 'colour all aspects of interaction, and influence even the most basic perceptions of the other' (Van de Walle & Six, 2014: 162). The same situation, then, could be differently judged by people who have different dispositions (ibid).

Digitalization is another trend that affects how citizens are classified, and that supports the making of judgments on trustworthiness. The public encounter increasingly proceeds indirectly via telephone or email (screen-level bureaucracy), or is even totally automated and pre-programmed involving no contact with a 'real official' (system-level bureaucracy) (Bovens & Zouridis, 2002). One the one hand, this could make the bureaucratic process more transparent, enabling citizens to access more information in a

codified manner (Margetts, 2006). Moreover, since interactions are codified, this lead to more consistency in how cases are treated. On the other hand, formalized digital interactions also take away or diminish officials' discretion at the frontline, making it harder to be responsive towards citizens' particular circumstances. It might be easier to be responsive to a citizen when encountering him/her in person, than when only knowing him/her 'on paper'. The street-level bureaucracy literature shows that frontline officials look at citizens' attitude and behavior in the interaction in order to judge their deservingness (e.g. Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003; Erickson, 1975). What characteristics do officials look at when they only have indirect contact with citizens? Is there still room for responsiveness (could be trust and distrust) when officials need to fill out fixed templates on a computer? How does this impersonal contact affect citizens' trust in the government?

Moreover, when bureaucracies do not employ street-level bureaucrats who handle individual cases, but mainly employees involved in data and system management, we need to extend our focus to the discretionary powers of system designers, legal policy staff and IT experts (Bovens & Zouridis, 2002). What consequences do algorithms employed by information systems, for instance, have for how citizens are classified? Is a generalized trust and distrust in certain social groupings, then, translated in these algorithms? The notion of responsiveness, then, shifts from being interpersonal, between officials and citizens, to being impersonal; 'the system' is responsive to certain social groupings with specific characteristics that are believed to deserve a different treatment.

This also relates to the role of paper forms in bureaucracies, mediating the relationship between officials and citizens (See Hull, 2012 for an overview). Weber (1921/1968) viewed the use of documents in bureaucracy as the perpetuation of norms and as a means to establish organizational control. By using forms, interactions between people can be (pre)structured, according to what is deemed important within the bureaucratic organization. If frontline officials are urged and trained to use documents to 'process citizens', but also to guide them in conversing with citizens, how does this influence their relationship with citizens? Do these documents perpetuate the unequal power balance between officials and citizens? Or do they enable officials to be more open towards citizens? When documents are intended to curtail

officials' discretion and steer officials' actions within an interaction, this logically hampers a trust-based interpersonal relationship.

Signals as shortcuts

A final aspect affecting street-level judgment and decision-making is the pervasive uncertainty frontline officials deal with in interactions with citizens (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003). It has been suggested that they look for signals or cues that are believed to be linked to citizens' unobserved properties (i.e. trustworthiness) to reduce this uncertainty (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005; Mennerick, 1974; Raaphorst & Groeneveld, 2015). Social workers, for instance, look at citizens co-cooperativeness in the interaction to know something more about his/her deservingness. Employers look at job applicants' educational level to gain insight in that person's competences. The sorting of cues, it is held, is based on social typologies of citizens (Mennerick, 1974). These typologies are held to provide strategic information, where formal categories are lacking.

Although this matching of cues to social typologies reduces uncertainty, there is always the danger of classifying citizens wrongly as 'good' or 'bad', or as trustworthy or untrustworthy. Initial encounters between frontline workers and citizens may be pervaded by uncertainty and fear on the part of workers, and within this context 'workers are likely to employ stigmatizing social identities to get a fix on a person and in so doing put themselves on the defensive, keenly attuned to their own safety' (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003: 91). The use of social typologies could thus reinforce existing stereotypes regarding citizens, which could be difficult for the latter to break through.

This interpretation of signals is not only affected by the uncertainty in interaction, but also by officials' mind-sets. If officials have a tendency to distrust or trust (certain groups of) citizens, they will probably primarily discern the signals and cues conforming this view (Van de Walle & Six, 2014). How cues and signals are interpreted is not a purely individual matter, but affected by the organizational culture and social typologies shared by society at large (Raaphorst & Groeneveld, 2015).

Although the 'selective perception' of cues is inevitable, since people cannot go beyond their own perspective, the question for practitioners is whether officials' interpretation, fed by cultural beliefs, is reconcilable with democratic notions of equality and fairness. When societal or organizational cultural beliefs regarding citizens' trustworthiness or untrustworthiness 'leak' into the public encounter, what does this mean for equal treatment of citizens? When frontline officials have more room to establish trust-based encounters with citizens, do governments then also allow more room for individual differences between public officials' judgments? This demonstrates that the public sector's move to trust-based working also comes with important caveats.

Trust in the public sector: Emerging topics and research agenda

We end this chapter by formulating a brief research agenda outlining a number of emerging issues in the field of public administration.

Citizen behaviour

Signals and scholarly work on the alleged trust gap between the public sector and citizens point in different directions. Where data is available, there is no apparent trend of decreasing citizen trust in the government (Van de Walle, 2008). Citizens tend to trust specific institutions such as schools, health systems or fire services, whereas they have low trust in more abstract notions as public administration, civil servants or bureaucrats (Van de Walle & Van Ryzin, 2011). However, to know more about whether citizens trust the government, scholars should not only look at their attitudes, but also study their behaviour. Future studies should more closely examine citizen behaviour that seems to stem from a distrusting or low-trusting stance toward the government, such as complaining, aggressiveness toward frontline officials, lawsuits and exit behaviour.

The effects of trust-based working

Whereas citizens' trust in the public sector receives scholarly attention, the other side of the trust gap – government's trust in citizens – is barely studied (but see: Keulemans, 2015; Moyson et al., 2016; Raaphorst & Groeneveld, 2015; Yang, 2005). Whereas there is a trend towards trust-based

collaboration with citizens, the scholarly attention to whether officials, indeed, trust citizens is lagging behind. Future research could study whether and how trust is created in institutions as well as in interpersonal interactions. The trend towards trust-based working is moreover based on expectations about the alleged positive effects of more trust, such as a reduction of red tape and transaction costs. Public administration scholars should focus on what the effects of trust-based working actually are, also looking more broadly and non-normatively at the consequences for citizens.

Socialization of public officials

Studies have suggested that frontline officials become more cynical as they are longer in service and have experienced more disappointing interactions with citizens (Blau, 1960; Engbersen, 2006). This could imply that more tenured officials have a different attitude towards citizens than newcomers. This raises questions as to how newcomers are socialized in the public organization; what do they learn, and how do their attitudes evolve over time? What is the role of interactions with citizens in how public officials' attitudes are shaped? And also important: how do public organizations deal with differences in attitudes between employees? Public administration scholars should focus more on how newcomers in public organisations 'learn the ropes' and how they learn to interact with citizens (see Oberfield, 2014 for a good example). The street-level bureaucracy literature suggests that officials' mind-sets are important in how citizens are judged and classified. This raises issues for practitioners working with newcomers in the public sector, since officials' dispositions are probably acquired through organizational socialization, but also through socialization earlier in life. Does the public sector want officials with a low-trust attitude or high-trust attitude? And is there also room for distrust? These are all questions that arise when public sectors promote trust and collaboration, that need not to be addressed by scholars, but by policy makers and public managers.

Consequences for public values

The classical Weberian perspective on bureaucracy conceives of it as an apparatus serving the larger powers, that is characterized by a clear and hierarchical 'sphere of competence' (Weber, 1921/1968), in which bureaucrats ideally work according to rules, procedures and policies as to safeguard 'expertise, equality, and reliability over arbitrariness, power abuse, and personal whims' (Bartels, 2013: 470). In

this ideal typical model, 'bureaucracy develops the more perfectly, the more it is "dehumanized", the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation' (Weber, 1921/1968: 973). Clearly, within this ideal typical view on bureaucracy there is no room for trust between officials and citizens. As an interpersonal notion, trust brings in human judgment. Whereas trust is considered a valuable thing within today's collaborative forms of governance, from a more traditional view of bureaucracy all interactions between officials and citizens should be neutral and guided by rules and procedures. Our main task as scholars is not to take stances in this debate, but to closely follow the developments in the public sector and critically analyse them against the notions on which democracy is based, and the consequences these developments have for how the government carries out its tasks and how citizens are treated.

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